

TRIBUTE TO MRS. THELMA
GIBSON

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2006

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Mrs. Thelma Gibson who will celebrate her 80th birthday on December 17th with friends, families and well wishers.

Mrs. Gibson is a South Florida institution, a woman who has dedicated herself to a lifelong pursuit of education, while focusing on improving public healthcare in our community and instilling the virtues of community service and volunteerism in all people who are graced by her presence.

Mrs. Gibson is the sixth of fourteen children and was born on December 17, 1926 to Sweetlon Counts Albury Anderson and Thomas Theodore Anderson. Mrs. Gibson is the mother of 2 children, Charles Gibson and Deveniece Gibson. She has 7 sisters and brothers—Joyce, Doris, Percy, Donald, Hubert, Alvin and Herma—and has a host of loving nieces and nephews. Mrs. Gibson is a native Miamian and the widow of the late Reverend Canon Theodore Roosevelt Gibson.

Mrs. Gibson received her formative education at Coconut Grove Training School for Colored Elementary School, Coconut Grove Junior High School, and George Washington Carver High School, from which she graduated in February 1944. After graduation, Mrs. Gibson attended Saint Agnes School of Nursing at Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina and graduated in August 1947 as a Registered Nurse with a specialty in operating room techniques. She then returned home to work at Jackson Memorial Hospital in the operating room, where she had been approved for a position. Her employer, however, upon realizing that she was of Color, assigned her to work on the Colored wards.

Mrs. Gibson continued her education in nursing by taking an advanced course from Florida A & M University taught by Dr. Mary Carnegie, Dean of Nursing, in a classroom provided by Jackson Memorial Hospital. In the summers of 1954 and 1955, while preparing to work in Public Health Nursing, Mrs. Gibson took advanced courses at Catholic University in Washington, DC. During the summers of 1956 and 1957, she attended the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where she enrolled in courses on cancer and communicable disease nursing. From there, she attended courses given through the University of Miami in 1957 and 1958 out of the home of an instructor who lived in Coconut Grove at the corner of Main Highway and Lennox Avenue. A course was also provided at Booker T. Washington Senior High School. Finally, in 1959, Mrs. Gibson attended Teachers College at Columbia University, New York and earned her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing education.

For more than 50 years, Mrs. Gibson has been a trailblazer in education, mental and physical health programs, and a community leader who served her church and family. In August of 1997, she was appointed as Interim City Commissioner and served on the City of Miami Commission through November 1997.

Mrs. Gibson holds memberships on numerous boards, committees, and panels, and has

received many honors, awards, recognitions, and certificates. The most recent accomplishment to Mrs. Gibson's credit is authoring her autobiography, *Forbearance: Thelma Vernell Anderson Gibson, The Life Story of a Coconut Grove Native* that was released in the Fall of 2000. Mrs. Gibson also sponsors the Thelma Gibson Health Initiative, housed at the Theodore R. Gibson Building, that provides free testing and assistance for HIV and AIDS infected persons. Her latest project is the Theodore and Thelma School of the Performing Arts located on Grand Avenue in Coconut Grove where the students receive academic training with a focus on the Arts.

Mr. Speaker, I know all my colleagues join me in honoring Mrs. Gibson, a truly great lady, as she celebrates her 80th birthday. We can only wonder and marvel at the achievements that are still before her.

PRESIDENT YUSCHENKO'S
EDITORIAL

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2006

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, the following is an op-ed written by President Victor Yushenko of Ukraine, which appeared in the Washington Post on November 29, 2006. As a strong supporter of United States-Ukrainian bilateral relations and Ukraine's further integration into the trans-Atlantic community, I believe it is imperative that the upcoming 110th Congress play a greater role in fostering cooperation between our two nations. To do so, we must be prepared to reach out to President Yushenko, Prime Minister Yanukovych and all the Ukrainian people as they take the sometimes difficult steps to further democratize. It is essential that Ukraine continues to have the support of the United States and our European allies during this period of transition, so that the ideals of freedom and democracy developed and echoed during the Orange Revolution come to bear.

The text of President Yushenko's editorial follows:

Two years ago an authoritarian regime's attempt to hijack the presidential election in Ukraine failed. As official results were announced, disbelief provoked millions of citizens to pour into the streets in protest. They took a stand against those discredited officials who hid behind law enforcement bodies in an attempt to prolong their corrupt hold on power. Those days and weeks are known as Ukraine's Orange Revolution.

In the time since, my main goal as president has been to institutionalize democracy and guarantee that it is irreversible. Many of the wrongs in my country have been corrected. We are maintaining our unwavering commitment to the principles of freedom. We agreed to shift constitutional powers from an authoritarian presidency to a coalition government formed by parliament to end the country's political impasse. And we abolished state censorship of the media, while also forbidding interference in news reporting.

This year free and fair elections were held at national, regional and local levels. Overseeing the peaceful and democratic transition of power was my unique test, as it brought back to office my former political opponents.

But along with our national successes and economic achievements under two "orange" prime ministers, there have been disappointments and miscalculations. Infighting among my political allies has been the biggest disappointment. Some "orange" politicians have ignored their fundamental duty to deliver results for the public good. Instead, gaining political power and seeking the limelight have become their goal. As our country's democracy continues to mature, I am convinced that a young cadre of leaders will rise through the ranks of Ukraine's democratic parties to create a political renewal.

On my watch, the corruption that has historically emanated from the president's office ceased. Thousands of election officials, tax collectors, foot patrols, road police and customs agents were brought to justice for petty corruption. Yet the biggest abusers of public office remain at large because of unreformed prosecutors and corruption in the courts. I have recently initiated a number of anti-corruption bills to reform the criminal justice system and the courts, and I will continue to press parliament for speedy action.

Because we were preoccupied with domestic political reforms this year, we failed to communicate effectively with our international partners. I want to explain where Ukraine stands and where we are heading. Democracy and stability—two interdependent principles—form the basis of my agenda. To this end, I will continue constitutional reforms that facilitate the effective work of government and prevent a return to authoritarianism or the usurpation of power.

Today there is a balance of political power between two directly elected democratic bodies: the president and parliament. The prime minister, although not directly elected, represents a majority of the parliamentarians. Bills specifying the role of the governing coalition and the opposition have yet to be passed. But let there be no mistake: Together we share responsibility for shaping, executing and controlling laws and state policies.

Second, constitutional reforms are incomplete, and as a result there is a political asymmetry. We will continue refining a reliable system of checks and balances between the presidency, parliament and coalition government to expedite policy decision making. To meet these objectives, I have commissioned a group of constitutional experts to recommend amendments to strengthen our nascent democratic institutions.

Third, our law on national security promotes participation and membership in pan-European and regional systems of collective security. Membership in the European Union and NATO, as well as good relations and strategic partnerships with Russia and other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States, are not romantic ideas of the Orange Revolution—they are founded in Ukrainian law. The president, coalition government and parliament determine the speed with which these goals are reached.

Most important, the democratic debates in Kiev's halls of power are now centered on ideas about competing economic theories, values and worldviews. Our current system of checks and balances requires policy coordination, party coexistence and political compromise for us to move forward. Not everyone likes the new rules of the game, and some are having trouble playing in this new reality—but Ukraine's democracy is here to stay.

As president, my historic mission is to guarantee that Ukraine's national goals are reached not through political dictates but through an institutionalized democratic